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Intelligence Memorandum

*The Effect of the Past Month's Events
on North Vietnamese Military Capabilities*

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
8 June 1972

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

THE EFFECT OF THE PAST MONTH'S EVENTS
ON NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY CAPABILITIES

INTRODUCTION

1. This memorandum addresses two related topics: (1) the capability of the Communists to continue their offensive in South Vietnam during the next one or two months, and (2) the impact on Hanoi's capabilities -- both in the short and long term -- of the US interdiction effort in North Vietnam. The first section of the memorandum deals mainly with the Communists' current manpower and logistic situation in South Vietnam and their prospects for the immediate future. The second section deals with the longer range implications of the US interdiction effort, both as it affects the movement of supplies into and through North Vietnam and its impact on the economy.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

2. The current offensive in South Vietnam has cost Hanoi dearly in military casualties and supplies expended or destroyed. The drain on North Vietnam's manpower pool has undoubtedly been heavier than at any time since 1968. Hanoi's greatest manpower problem is not the simple magnitude of its losses, but the heavy casualties sustained among the officer and cadre ranks, losses that cannot quickly be made good by crash training efforts. Since the end of March this year the North Vietnamese have expended arms, ammunition, and other military equipment at rates which at times have exceeded even the high levels of the 1968 Tet offensive. The enemy already faces serious replacement problems with some types of ordnance. In addition, with the onset of the wet season, his resupply problem in general will become increasingly difficult in all areas of South Vietnam other than northern Military Region (MR) 1.

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3. It is still too early to make any comprehensive judgments about the effects on North Vietnam's longer term capabilities of the US interdiction program. It is clear that the volume of supplies moving into North Vietnam is substantially below the levels being maintained prior to the mining of Haiphong. There are indications that some supplies are continuing to move into North Vietnam on the overland routes from the People's Republic of China (PRC). It is impossible to determine either the composition or the volume of these overland movements, but there is evidence that at least a part of them are the essentials of war -- ordnance and petroleum.

4. Notwithstanding these constraints, if North Vietnam makes the political decision to do so, it has the ability to prosecute its offensive in South Vietnam for the next several months at very high levels of activity in MR 1 and at substantial levels in other areas. (The timing of successive waves of attacks and their intensity, of course, may vary markedly from region to region.) This judgment is based both on our assessment of the enemy's force in being in South Vietnam and Cambodia -- its present combat readiness and recuperability -- and on our assessment of the enemy's continuing logistical preparations, including stock positioning in forward base areas. The fact that the enemy continues to carry out these preparations on a crash basis strongly suggests that he has already taken the decision to engage in a high level of combat in coming weeks.

5. The current US mining and bombing campaign has exacted a heavy toll from North Vietnam in imports foregone and major disruptions inflicted on its transportation system. There have also been some disruptions to North Vietnam's economy. None of these effects, however, has yet impinged in a significant way on North Vietnam's raw capabilities to continue the war in the South in the next one or two months. The military supplies necessary for the current offensive in this near-term time frame were almost certainly well out of rear base areas before the US interdiction effort was started.

6. Total imports into North Vietnam last year were on the order of 2.5 million tons, about 90% of which came in by sea. This total -- a daily average of 6,800 tons -- would place a very great burden on North Vietnam's transport system were Hanoi to attempt (and its Communist allies agree) to bring

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in this volume of imports largely by overland routes. If Hanoi introduces a rigorous program of austerity in its civilian consumption, by cutting back or even eliminating some agricultural and industrial imports, the total import requirements could be cut by around 50% in terms of tonnage. We estimate that this reduced level of imports would be adequate (psychological factors aside) to meet minimum civilian needs in the North and to satisfy the military requirements for continuing main force warfare in the South.

7. Whether even such a reduced level of imports could be achieved in the face of the heavy US bombing program remains to be seen. Historical experience would suggest that a determined enemy, by marshalling the manpower to rebuild bridges, lay out bypasses, and repair roads on a round-the-clock basis, could continue to move supplies in quantities sufficient to carry on the war effort. On the other hand, in the 1965-68 period of heavy bombing, the principal North Vietnamese port of Haiphong remained open and North Vietnam was fighting a type of war in South Vietnam that required less heavy equipment and significantly less petroleum. In addition, the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville was open to the Communists, and a large portion of Communist military supplies for the southern half of South Vietnam came through this port. In that earlier period, North Vietnam also had access to substantial amounts of Chinese labor, which contributed greatly to the effort to keep overland routes open. In the past month, only limited evidence has appeared of efforts by the North Vietnamese themselves to repair damaged railways and roads, and we have no firm evidence yet as to the Chinese attitude toward providing manpower assistance again for this purpose.

8. It will clearly be much more difficult than it was in the 1965-68 period for Hanoi to meet, over the longer term, the continued military requirements for the kind of war it is now fighting. Until we have accumulated evidence for at least another month or two of what is actually happening in the North Vietnamese land transport network, however, any judgment concerning the degree to which Hanoi will be able to overcome the obstacles it now faces is premature. We also need evidence, which only time will give us, on the scope and type of assistance that the Soviet Union and the PRC will provide to Hanoi in the present situation and on the extent of cooperation between these two powers in providing assistance.

9. Petroleum is probably the most important commodity in Hanoi's logistical equation. The type of war the North Vietnamese are now fighting and their entire logistical apparatus are both tied to petroleum. Military requirements at the present level of activity probably amount to about 120,000 tons of petroleum annually. As of 8 June 1972, following

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the first month of the current US bombing effort against petroleum storage facilities, North Vietnam's petroleum stocks for all purposes were probably sufficient for about ten weeks. Under a program of strict austerity in the civilian sector, present stocks might be stretched to last several weeks longer. There are indications that some petroleum shipments are being made overland, but it is doubtful that any major replenishment of stocks has yet been accomplished. Both the USSR and China have sufficient petroleum to meet North Vietnam's needs -- and the movement of this petroleum through China to the North Vietnam border would pose no insurmountable logistical burden. The current construction of a pipeline from the vicinity of Hai Duong, east of Hanoi, in the direction of China may indicate that some decisions have been made by the PRC and North Vietnam to facilitate petroleum shipments. Beyond this, however, there is no hard evidence of how -- or to what extent -- Hanoi's allies intend to meet North Vietnam's needs for petroleum or of how successful Hanoi will be in moving petroleum onward from the Chinese border.

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North Vietnam's Offensive Capabilities Over the
Next Two Months

Manpower

10. Thus far during the enemy's 1972 offensive, manpower losses have been large and have clearly affected the combat capability of some units. Nevertheless, Hanoi still has the capability to engage in large-scale main force offensive actions and almost certainly intends to do so. For the most part, lulls in activity so far during the campaign probably reflect requirements to regenerate battered units and prepare battlefields with engineering works and logistics. These activities continue apace.

11. It is difficult to determine the enemy's aggregate manpower position in the midst of any large campaign, but many of this season's infiltrates have probably already been absorbed by logistics, engineering, and other rear service functions, as well as by combat force requirements. In addition, the heavy fighting has had adverse effects on many units. Many seasoned officers and cadre have been killed during this offensive, and it will be difficult to integrate green troops into combat units. The enemy's artillery regiments are taking a heavy pounding, and his armored forces have been seriously depleted. These problems will reduce the enemy's offensive punch, but the evidence is fairly clear that they will not deter him from undertaking new offensive operations in the near future. So far, the duration of intensive fighting has not been long for most units, and our evidence on infiltration indicates that sufficient replacements are available in most areas to support further action over at least the next two months or so even with casualty rates close to those of the April-May period.

Personnel Infiltration

12. Thus far, Hanoi has dispatched at least 120,000 men to the southern war zones during the current infiltration cycle (1 September 1971 through early June 1972). This compares with about 106,000 men from September through the end of June a year earlier. The number of infiltration starts detected in April and May 1972 was low, and there have been no starts detected so far in June. This season's pattern of infiltration activity is typical of that experienced since 1968, with high rates of infiltration during the period

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September through March, then a tapering off to very low rates by June. One major difference between personnel movements this season and those in the previous three years has been the large-scale deployment of main forces directly across the DMZ. We cannot estimate the number of infiltrators who have come across the DMZ outside of organized units, and they are not included in our figures. It is entirely possible that personnel could continue to move directly across the DMZ without being detected in infiltration communications in the months to come.

13. Infiltration starts during the 1970-71 and 1971-72 infiltration cycles by destination are shown in the tabulation below:

	1970-71 (Sep - Jun)	1971-72 (Sep - Early Jun)
MRs 1 and 2		
Tri-Thien-Hue	6,000	20,000 ^a
MR 5	14,200	17,000
B-3 Front	14,500	30,000 ^b
MRs 3 and 4 and Cambodia		
COSVN	45,000	38,000
Southern Laos	26,500	14,000
Total	106,200	119,000

a. This figure does not include all troops who moved directly across the DMZ.

b. The estimate of personnel moving to the B-3 Front has been reduced from our earlier figures as a result of a re-analysis of enemy communications.

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14. Our view of the enemy's manpower situation and current capabilities by military region is developed in the following paragraphs. Throughout the offensive, our data on personnel losses have been very soft because of the lack of continuity in field reporting and the combat circumstances surrounding the tactical situation. In each military region, however, we have made a "best judgment" on losses and their probable effect on combat capabilities. Our definition of losses includes personnel seriously wounded as well as killed.

Military Region 1

15. In MR 1 and the adjacent areas of Quang Binh Province in North Vietnam, we estimate that the North Vietnamese have lost some 20,000 troops this year. Infiltration has probably not been sufficient to make up all these losses and therefore some erosion in the strength of combat personnel has occurred since the offensive commenced.

16. In spite of these losses, we estimate that the North Vietnamese will be capable of sustaining major attacks throughout MR 1 and particularly in the Hue area over the next 30 days. Because of the relatively tight manpower situation, and the additional casualties that would be incurred in such a major push, the North Vietnamese would require additional manpower later in the summer to conduct a second major offensive of the same magnitude. Moreover, because the dry season in MR 1 continues through September and there are short lines of communication through the DMZ, the North Vietnamese could begin a new infiltration cycle at any time.

17. Armored forces will continue to be deployed in MR 1 for the remainder of the dry season and will play a key combat role in future major offensive activity. However, their combat effectiveness will be reduced because of the high losses these units have experienced since the offensive began and the combination of poorly coordinated combat tactics and the effective deployment of Allied anti-tank weapons.

18. At present, in the vicinity of Hue the North Vietnamese have massed forces including infantry, armor, and artillery regiments of the 325th, 324B, 308th, and 304th NVA Divisions, as well as units from the B-5/70 Front and the Tri-Thien-Hue Region. Elements of four divisions are located north and west of Hue City while the other units are located to the south and west. Since early May 1972, combat near Hue has been at a relatively low level, characterized by limited offensive forays

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by Vietnamese Marines behind North Vietnamese defense lines and one major assault -- which was repulsed -- by North Vietnamese forces against the South Vietnamese Marines. A large volume of evidence presently indicates that the North Vietnamese plan to launch larger scale attacks in the near future.

19. In southern MR 1, the North Vietnamese have the equivalent of one infantry division operating in the Quang Nam/Quang Tin Province border area. North Vietnamese strategy in the southern three provinces of MR 1 -- Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai -- has been characterized by the deployment of main and local forces near district capitals in an attempt to isolate GVN forces in the towns and permit the Communists to strengthen their position in the countryside. The success of the enemy's campaign in southern MR 1, will depend at least in part on the outcome of the battle for Hue.

Military Region 2

20. During the past two months, Communist forces in MR 2 have sustained heavy casualties in their attempts to drive government forces from Kontum Province in the western highlands and to take over Binh Dinh Province along the coast. In Kontum, the enemy deployed nine infantry regiments (three of the 320th NVA Division, two of the 2nd NVA Division, and four of the B-3 Front), two artillery regiments, one armor regiment, and several local force battalions to overrun several government outposts and to attack Kontum City, the provincial capital. In Binh Dinh the Communists used two regiments of the 3rd NVA Division to take control of the three northern districts in the province and used the remaining regiment in an attempt to cut east-west Route 19 at An Khe Pass. With the exception of the battles in northern Binh Dinh and at Tan Canh and Dak To in Kontum, the ARVN, extensively supported by US air power, has fought hard against the enemy thrusts. The heavy fighting in MR 2 thus far has probably cost the enemy about 10,000 men in losses, as well as a substantial number of his tanks in this region.

21. Almost all of this season's infiltrators who have arrived in MR 2 have already been absorbed by the major expansion of the combat and rear services order of battle and by losses early in the campaigning season. There appear to be about 5,000 replacements now arriving in MR 2. These personnel should be enough to replace only about half of the enemy's recent losses, leaving a net reduction of about 5,000 men in his combat strength.

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Even with this reduction, however, the Communists will still pose a powerful threat to ARVN in coming weeks. After a period for rest and refitting, the enemy forces should again be capable of serious attacks against Pleiku or Kontum, of cutting ARVN lines of communication in additional places, and of attacking some additional areas in the coastal lowlands. Major enemy combat operations in MR 2 may be curtailed, however, by increasingly poor operating conditions during the wet season. Heavy rains will limit his ability to move men and materiel and especially limit his use of tanks and heavy artillery.

Military Region 3

22. The Communists have had limited success in achieving their objectives in MR 3 thus far and have suffered heavy casualties. Inflexible battle plans and an underestimation of the fighting capabilities of ARVN ground forces supported by air power have disrupted and slowed the Communists' military timetable. Evidence is now emerging that the Communists have been forced to modify their battle plans and give up some of their objectives (e.g., a swift seizure of An Loc). The events of recent weeks plus the impact of changing weather will almost certainly alter the type of enemy offensive activity possible over the next two months or so. Offensive operations of some form will nonetheless continue as current enemy unit shifts indicate.

23. Three long-established enemy divisions and one newly formed divisional entity operating in MR 3 have suffered heavy casualties in combat around An Loc and elsewhere in MR 3. Enemy losses in the region as a whole are probably on the order of 10,000 men. Field reports point to the devastating effects of B-52 strikes and other Allied air strikes on massed troop formations as being responsible for a large proportion of these losses. It is likely that the Communists have had sufficient numbers of infiltrators on hand to replace losses thus far during the offensive; but they may now be reaching the limit or replacement capability. Prisoner interrogations give a picture of newly arrived infiltrators from the north being pushed into battle while still weak from the infiltration journey.

24. Recent moves of enemy units suggest that the Communists have had to alter their offensive plans and seek less ambitious objectives. The 9th Division pulled back from An Loc for reorganization and refitting, though elements may now be

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returning to combat. The 5th Division also pulled out of the An Loc area into Cambodia. These elements have now moved into the Parrot's Beak and will likely be targeted in the near future against Tay Ninh and Hau Nghia Provinces. Other units appear to have been pulled back to the Cambodia-Kien Phong-Kien Tuong Province border area. The 7th Division, though in a weakened condition, is still blocking Route 13 and has been ordered to prevent Allied forces from relieving An Loc.

Military Region 4

25. During the first two months of the current offensive in MR 4, enemy main force activity has been limited. The estimated loss of 3,000 troops is far smaller than the enemy's replacement capability from infiltration. Furthermore, unit redeployments from Cambodia have resulted in a large increase in combat forces in the region. As a result, the enemy is in a favorable position to initiate heavier combat during the next two to three months than thus far has been the case.

26. To date, however, Communist achievements in the delta have been fairly modest and the GVN's performance fairly impressive, particularly in light of the deployment to other regions of the equivalent of close to two ARVN divisions. Although sketchy reporting makes impossible a confident assessment of the security situation in many delta districts, in general the government still seems to have the upper hand in the most heavily populated parts of the region.

27. During the next month or so, the Communists will probably attempt to deploy deeper into the Delta in order to threaten ARVN lines of communications and try to gain control of some populated areas. This strategy, if successful, would have the effect of reducing Saigon's rice supply and isolating parts of the Delta from the rest of the country.

Logistics

Recent Developments

28. Since the start of the enemy's current military offensive, the Communist logistic commands in the DMZ area, the Laotian Panhandle, and Cambodia have been engaged in a major and continuing effort to move large quantities of supplies to the battle areas in South Vietnam. To accommodate this effort, the North Vietnamese extended their "General Transportation

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Offensive" through May, made a number of organizational adjustments, and increased road construction and maintenance work. In recent weeks the large-scale logistic drive has been tempered by heavy rains in the Laotian Panhandle which forced a sharp curtailment of resupply activity. However, heavy logistic activity has continued on the routes through the DMZ area, which will enjoy continued dry weather for the next several months, and in Cambodia, where the rains have not as yet seriously affected activity.

29. During April, the "highpoint" month of the "General Transportation Offensive," the Communists probably moved more supplies to units in South Vietnam than in any other month of the 1971/72 dry season. Aerial observers [REDACTED] 25X1D indicated very heavy use of the roads through the DMZ into northern MR 1. In the Laotian Panhandle, sensor detections reached peak levels, and vehicles, moving day and night, made longer truck hauls than ever before to reduce cargo-handling time. In Cambodia the picture was the same. A 30 April intercept ordered the unprecedented direct dispatch of 190 vehicles carrying 600 tons of ordnance from southern Laos to COSVN. An early May intercept revealed that the "Transportation Offensive" had been extended through the month to continue the resupply of the "battlefronts." The magnitude of the May effort was indicated by an intercept which stated that one logistical authority in Laos was scheduled to ship 4,000 tons of cargo to northern MR 1 during May.

30. Evidence of heavy logistic activity was also evident within MR 1, where the Communists built several new roads and built up their logistical organization. In an unprecedented move, a logistical authority located southwest of the Mu Gia Pass was ordered on 6 May to the Hue area of South Vietnam. A second logistical authority, believed to have operated in the northern part of the Laotian Panhandle, was moved south to reinforce the logistical organization just west of the DMZ, adjacent to MR 1.

31. In Cambodia, heavy logistic activity continued throughout May. Aerial observers reported continued large-scale vehicular movements through the Siem Pang-Stung Treng area as well as on the major roads leading to the B-3 Front. In anticipation of the wet season, the senior logistic authority in the area has ordered engineers not only to maintain the roads but also to "develop and maintain the river route," which will undoubtedly be used extensively as the rains progressively

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restrict motorized transport. Farther south, aerial observers have similarly reported a high level of supply activity on routes leading from Kratie and Chup to MR 3 and the Parrot's Beak area. For example, on 28 May, 50 trucks in a convoy were observed moving east on Route 155 near the South Vietnamese border.

32. As the wet season progresses, the Communists' capability to move supplies by truck will continue to be progressively restricted, except in northern MR 1. Judging from preparations being made and stockpiles already in place, however, the enemy will not shut down the Laotian Panhandle system this summer, as has occurred in some years in the past. To keep supplies moving through, the Communists could, for example, use their new "central corridor" in the Laotian Panhandle -- a series of roads built or improved this dry season. It is a heavily canopied route, difficult to interdict, and not highly susceptible to landslides caused by rain.

Outlook for the Rainy Season

33. Despite the enemy's effort to maintain his logistical momentum in the Laotian Panhandle, heavy rains during the latter part of May have forced a reduction in logistic activity as weather typical of the annual southwest monsoon prevailed over the Panhandle. Several intercepted enemy messages indicate that the North Vietnamese have reduced the average tonnage carried by vehicles in order to facilitate transport on slippery and muddy roads.

34. Nevertheless, the North Vietnamese are making strenuous efforts to counter the effects of the rains by graveling roads, by rapid repair, and by continued resupply efforts.

25X1D3a [REDACTED] most major roads in the Panhandle were in good condition and sustaining a moderate level of traffic. The enemy apparently intends to continue vehicle activity for as long as is possible, but it is clear that the period of large-scale vehicle activity has ended. The enemy has access to an extensive river supply system for moving supplies both into and out of Cambodia, but one fact is clear: the amount shipped will be much lower than dry season levels, with the actual volume of supplies moved this summer hinging on the severity of the monsoon rains, the interdiction effort, and the tactical situation in South Vietnam.

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Logistic Capabilities, By Region

35. The current enemy offensive in South Vietnam has resulted in a sharp increase in expenditures of all types of supplies, but to date there has been little evidence of shortages. The diminishing level of surface-to-air missile and antiaircraft artillery firings in North Vietnam quite clearly indicate a Communist decision to conserve these munitions and may reflect developing real shortages, but within South Vietnam we have detected no shortages which could be related to the US interdiction campaign in the North. We judge enemy logistic prospects, by Military Region, to be as follows.

36. Military Region 1: The Communists are logistically capable of supporting major operations in MR 1 throughout the summer. The monsoon rains which are already beginning to affect other areas of South Vietnam will not influence Communist operations in MR 1. Because of their proximity to major supply lines in Laos and the DMZ, Communist forces in MR 1 operate from a close and more secure logistics base. They have received substantially greater supply flows this year and with increased local procurement of supplies are in a much stronger supply position than they were a year ago. The Communists have roads extending through the DMZ as well as a petroleum pipeline system into the DMZ. Because of these and other logistic assets, the North Vietnamese should experience few logistic constraints in MR 1 over the next few months.

37. During the period October 1971 through May 1972, at least 4,600 tons of supplies were delivered into MR 1 through southern Laos. To sustain the offensive in MR 1 the Communists require about 900 tons monthly, including food, weapons, and ammunition. While this is substantially above the average dry season flow from Laos, several considerations indicate that the enemy should experience little difficulty meeting projected requirements. First and most important, the 4,600-ton estimate includes only deliveries through Laos; additional, very large amounts of supplies have been transported straight across the DMZ since early April. Second, prior to the enemy's offensive, the Communists unquestionably stockpiled large quantities of ordnance for the offensive. Third, our food estimate may be overstated in view of the ready access the Communists have had to foodstocks in northern South Vietnam as a result of their successes in Quang Tri and elsewhere in MR 1.

38. Military Region 2: Weather will restrict enemy logistical operations in MR 2 this summer, but the substantial supply

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deliveries this past dry season probably give the enemy an adequate reserve. COMINT reflected heavy shipments of ordnance into the area this spring, substantially more than has yet appeared in combat. Concurrently, the enemy transported large volumes of foodstuffs from Cambodia and the coastal lowlands of north South Vietnam to forces deployed in the B-3 Front. The amount of stocks already available in supply areas near the combat zones and the ability of the Communists to deliver some additional supplies into the area during the wet season provide the requisite supply base from which to continue operations. The main problem, one which is already evident, is that of moving supplies to forward positions in a timely manner. Weather and air strikes have already produced some food distribution problems. Recently captured documents, for example, have revealed food shortages among elements of the 320th Division. Other supplies are apparently available in sufficient quantities, however, and few ammunition shortages have been detected.

39. An estimated 7,400 to 9,400 tons of supplies were delivered from southern Laos to the B-3 Front during the period October 1971 - May 1972. Weapons, ammunition, and equipment constituted a little more than half of this total (4,300 to 5,500 tons). The current estimate of the weapons, ammunition, and equipment required to sustain offensive operations in this area is about 270 tons monthly, considerably below average monthly deliveries from southern Laos. Thus, detected shipments of ordnance to the B-3 Front area should be adequate for current military operations and providing reserves for stockpiles for the wet season.

40. Military Regions 3 and 4: The Communists have enough stocks in place to support continuous heavy action in the provinces contiguous to the Cambodia border. The enemy's massive expenditure of mortar, rocket, and artillery ammunition against An Loc provides tangible evidence of large supply stores on hand in support of border province operations. Communist forces currently need about 600 tons of weapons, equipment, and ammunition supplies per month to prosecute the war in MRs 3 and 4 and to support present operations in Cambodia. Supplies consigned to Cambodia and COSVN from Laos during the past dry season amounted to 6,500 to 8,400 tons, an amount well in excess of enemy requirements before the offensive and above their current needs. These deliveries plus additional amounts moved by road and waterways during the summer would allow the Communists to initiate substantial offensive operations over the next few months. Manpower will be more of a limiting factor than supplies.

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41. There will be problems, however, associated with moving supplies to the interior. For example, Long An Subregion communications have indicated shortages of ammunition and explosive devices among some district units, and low-level source reporting has revealed that logistic problems in the lower Delta as a result of a lack of extensive Viet Cong control have made large-scale attacks difficult to initiate. Ammunition shortages have been reported in Viet Cong Ben Tre Province, south of Saigon; and, in the upper Delta, enemy units in Dinh Tuong Province reportedly were unable to intensify attacks in mid-May because of ammunition shortages. Finally, armor and artillery losses by the Communists over the past two months may not be replaceable during the rainy season.

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North Vietnam's Offensive Capabilities in
Relation to the US Interdiction Effort

42. It seems clear from the foregoing discussion that the Communists have sufficient military stocks in place to continue offensive activity in South Vietnam for the next two months or so at the least. There is no evidence that the current mining and bombing program has yet impinged directly on front-line capabilities in the short term. Whether or not it will do so later on depends on such factors as the ability of the North Vietnamese to circumvent the interdiction program and the willingness of the Communist allies to pour supplies into North Vietnam in sufficient quantities to offset bombing losses.

Import Requirements

43. One way of gaining perspective on the potential impact of the current mining and air interdiction effort is to determine the "minimum" amount of imports which North Vietnam must have to sustain its economy and continue the war. Total imports in 1971 -- about 2.5 million tons -- enabled Hanoi to continue its war effort in Indochina and prepare for the current offensive while continuing to rebuild its industry and at least sustain the existing standard of living for its people. Many of these imports are essential for North Vietnam's continued economic and military viability; some are not essential. As a rough estimate, we judge that if during the next twelve months, about 1 million tons of aid arrive in North Vietnam from Communist countries -- less than 50% of 1971 deliveries -- Hanoi could continue a high level of combat in the South and meet essential civilian needs at home. (1)

44. North Vietnam is wholly dependent upon imports for petroleum, which for the past four years have averaged close to 400,000 tons annually. If Hanoi strictly rationed its civilian petroleum consumers, consumption might be reduced by some 50,000 tons. North Vietnam also probably has enough domestic food supplies to feed its people until the next harvest in October/November of this year, although some

1. The imposition of extreme austerity by the regime could, of course, mean even lower import requirements. It is always risky to predict what a relatively underdeveloped country may or may not find to be essential under crisis conditions.

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belt-tightening would be necessary. Once the next harvest is reached, food supplies should be adequate into the first months of 1973. No additional fertilizer imports this year will be necessary to ensure adequate food supplies in North Vietnam throughout 1972. North Vietnam undoubtedly can reduce imports of a wide range of other items normally used in the economy, but in so doing will have to forego economic development and accept a decline in production. General and miscellaneous imports by sea during 1971 totaled 350,000 tons. By maintaining imports of only essential commodities, much of this category of imports could probably be eliminated.

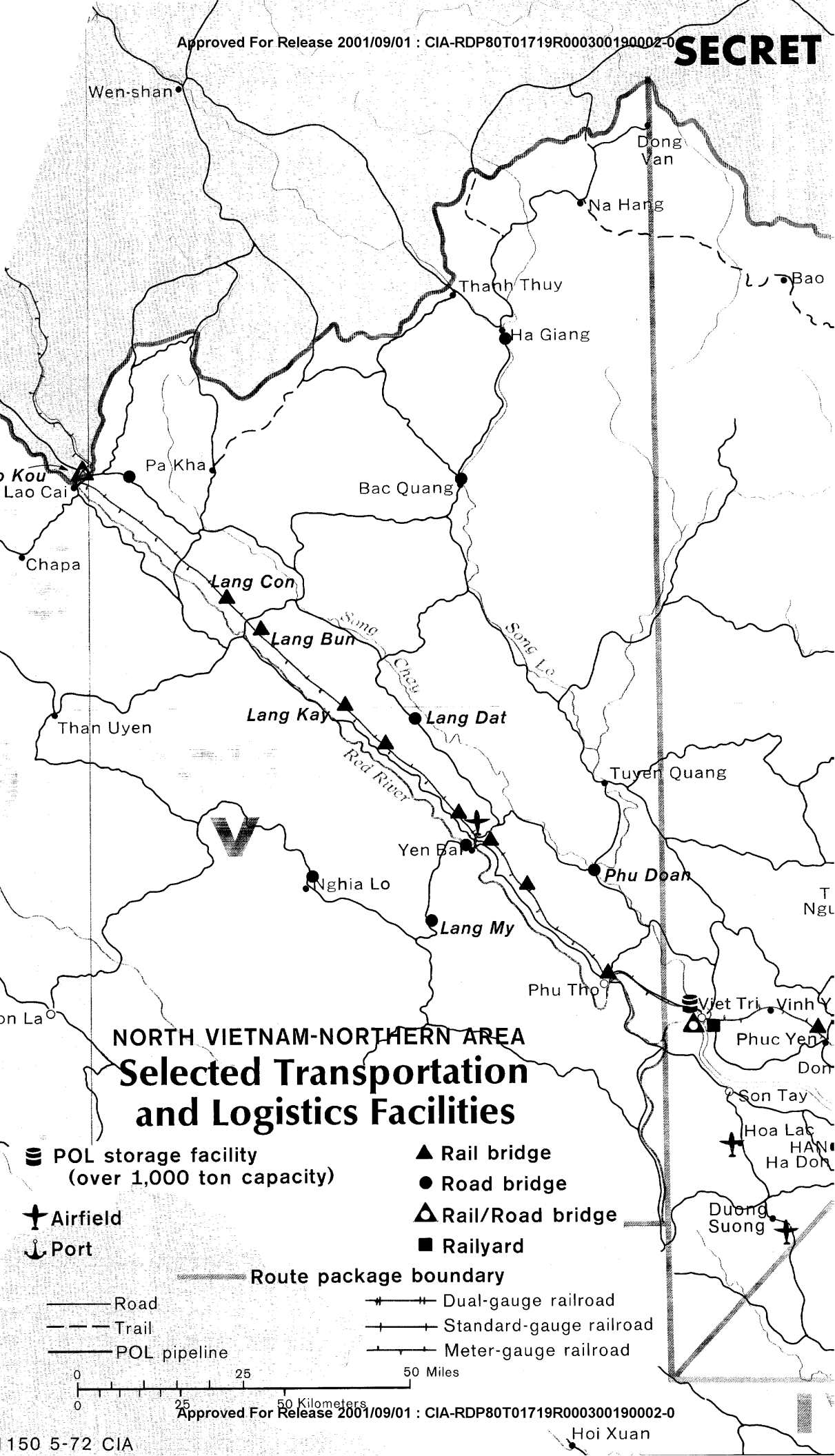
Evidence of Overland Movements from the PRC

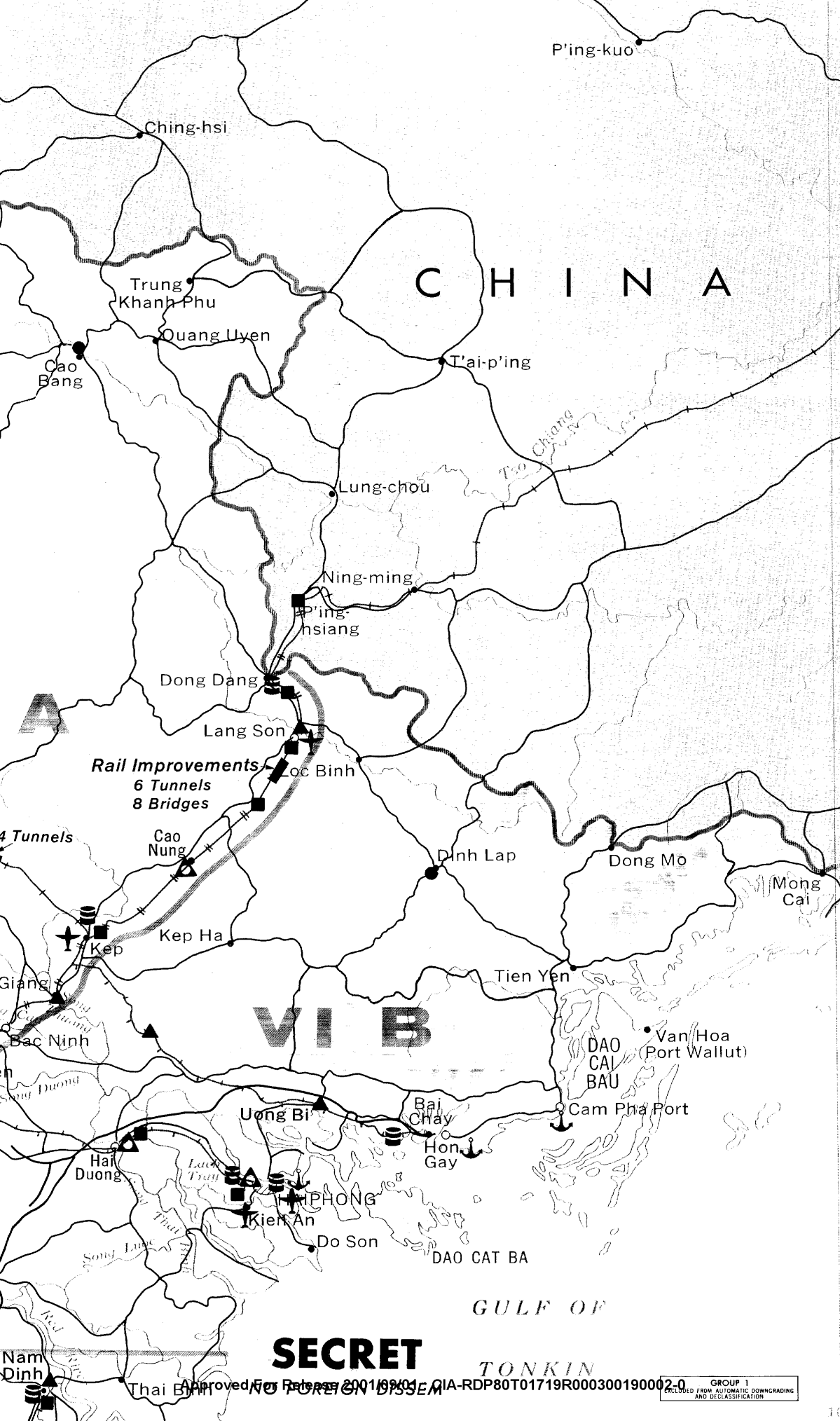
45. The evidence on overland movement of supplies between the PRC and North Vietnam by rail is not sufficient to support firm estimates. (2) During May, identified rail shipments totaling at least 3,900 tons were dispatched to North Vietnam from the USSR, China, and Eastern Europe. Added to this were the goods already en route which during the month were delivered to P'ing-hsiang, China, the classification and transloading yard near the border where the cargoes are accepted for further delivery into North Vietnam.

- Between 18 and 21 May, the PRC dispatched more than 1,500 tons of steel, and between 19 and 21 May, sent some 525 tons of foodstuffs by rail to P'ing-hsiang, and possibly into North Vietnam. (On 4 May, Hanoi had requested immediate delivery of more than 9,000 tons of steel from the USSR, 1,750 tons of the total by express train. At mid-month, COMINT reflected a backlog of 1,650 tons of steel awaiting acceptance at the border by the North Vietnamese.)
- On 25 and 31 May, Soviet foreign trade representatives confirmed shipment by rail from North Vietnam to Moscow of carpets and other items.
- On 2 June, US aircraft reportedly destroyed a seven-car train on the Lao Cai-Hanoi line 55 miles from the China border. On the same day, a drone photographic mission over the Dong Dang-Hanoi line south of Kep showed a flanged-wheel truck pulling two small rail cars, indicating that some shuttling is under way on the line.

2. There is as yet no information on the use of roads or the Red River entering North Vietnam from China.

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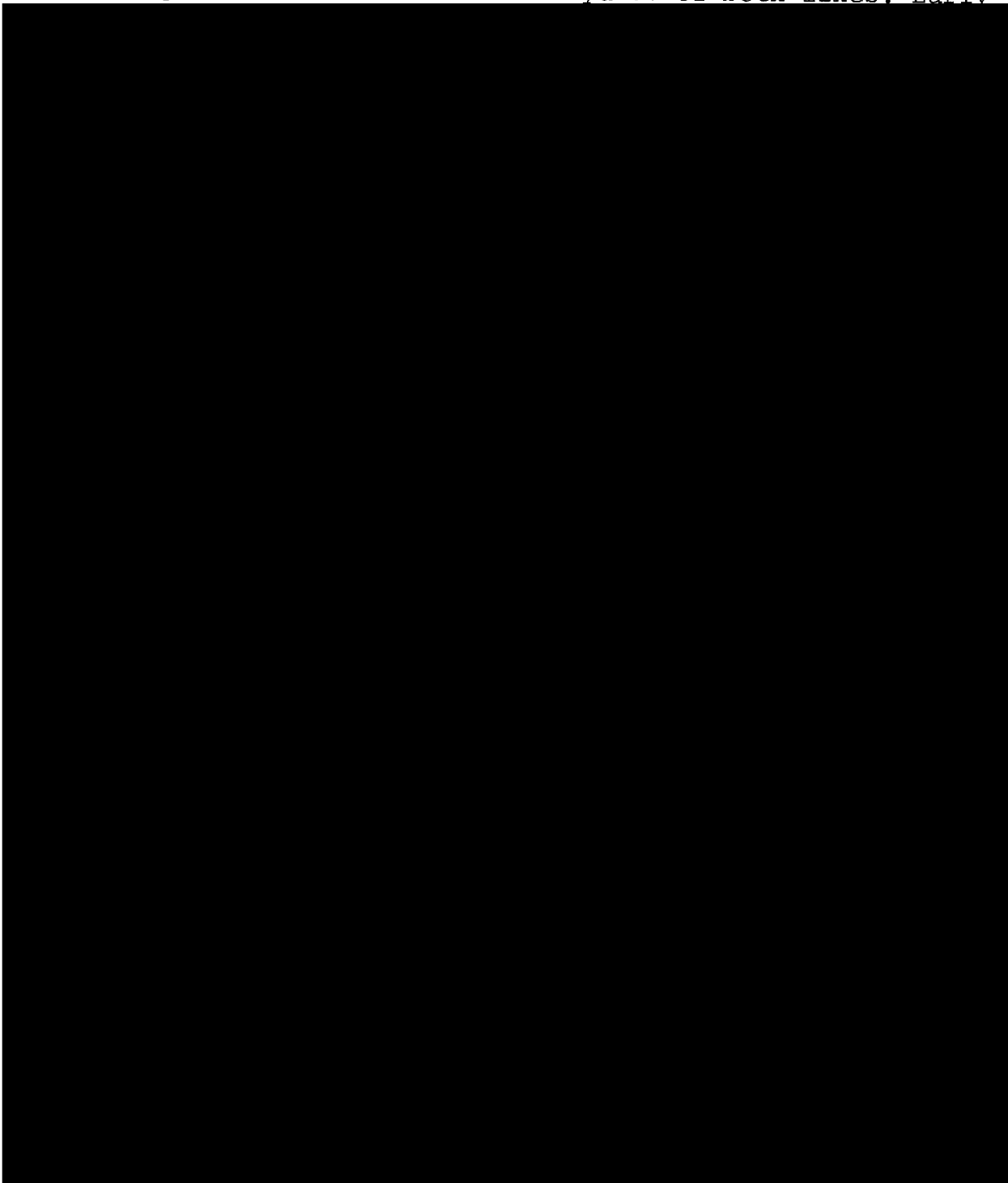
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46. Rail traffic appears to have been at or near normal levels on at least some sections of both the Dong Dang-Hanoi and Lao Cai-Hanoi lines, and there are some signs that traffic is moving in and out of the border yards of both lines. Early

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Seaborne Resupply

48. No foreign merchant ships have transited the minefields since their activation on 12 May. At that time, 23 ships were en route to North Vietnam with nearly 160,000 tons of cargo. Of this number, 19 subsequently were diverted and five (including a Soviet ship that left Gdynia after the mines were activated) are still en route. These ships almost certainly will be diverted as they near North Vietnamese waters. As of 8 June, 29 ships were in North Vietnamese ports: 26 at Haiphong, one at Cam Pha, one at Hon Nieu anchorage serving Vinh, and one at Hon La Island, 60 miles south of Vinh.

49. China has permitted three East European ships to offload cargo bound for North Vietnam at Huang-pu (near Canton and Hong Kong); a fourth is en route, and permission for it and others apparently will be given. Although no Soviet dry cargo ship has been permitted to enter a Chinese port as yet, two Soviet dry cargo ships have requested Chinese permission to unload at Huang-pu. (Their requests have so far gone unanswered.) The Soviet tanker *Pevek* arrived at Huang-pu on 24 May for bunkering and repairs to damage sustained during a US air strike on Haiphong and departed on 6 June. Its cargo of petroleum was apparently not offloaded. The ship appeared to be riding low in the water on departure.

50. On about 30 May, two Chinese freighters carrying an estimated 6,000 tons of unidentified cargo moved into southern North Vietnamese waters from the Chinese port of Huang-pu. One ship joined two other Chinese ships, which had been at the Hon Nieu anchorage since mid-April.(3) The other moved to Hon La Island some 60 miles to the south of Vinh and just

3. These ships -- the *Hung Chi* 152 and 160 -- left the anchorage on or about 6 June, apparently heading for a port in China.

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HANDLE VIA TALENT - KEYHOLE - COMINT CONTROL SYSTEMS JOINTLY

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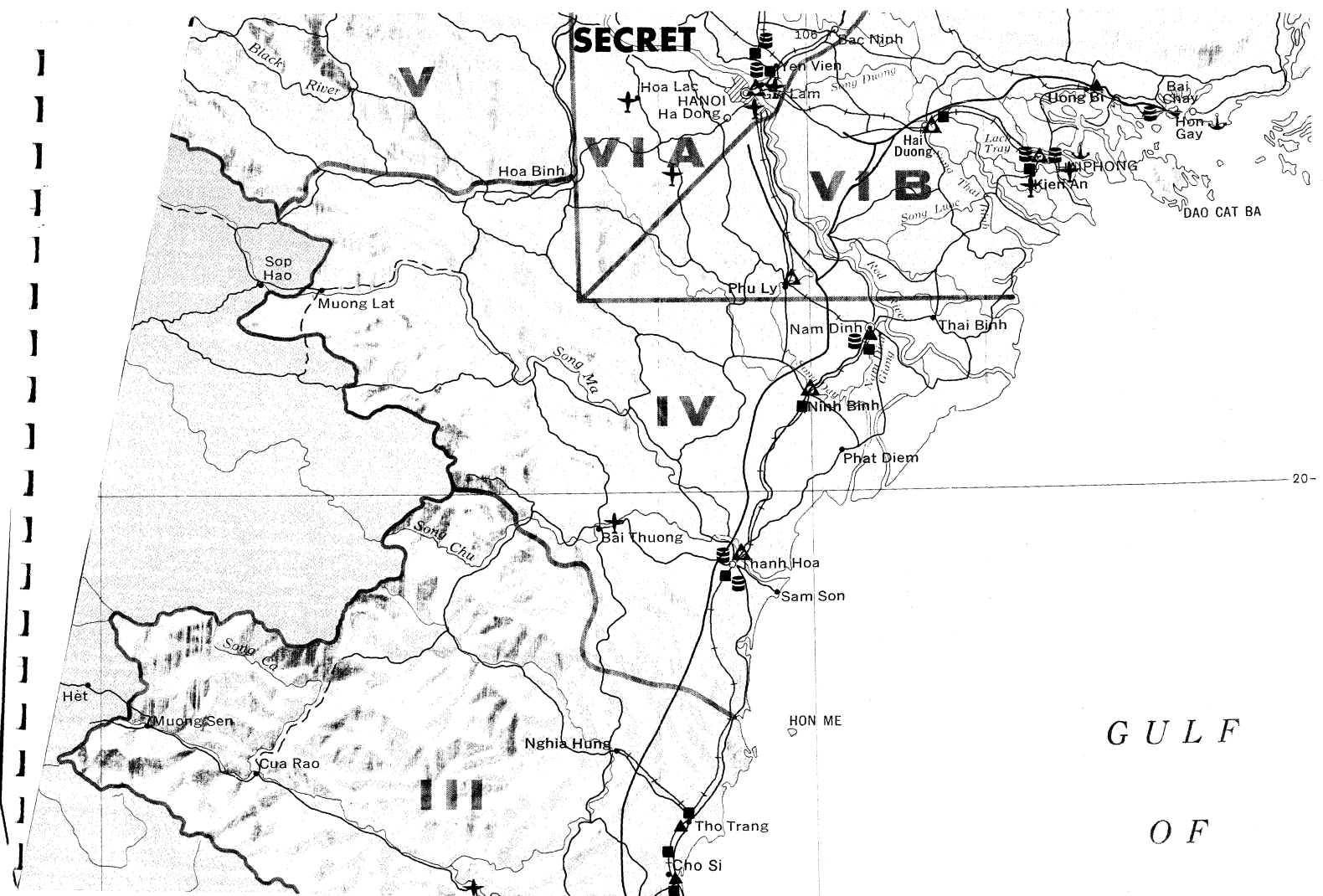
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25X1D3a north of Quang Khe. [REDACTED] all four vessels have been engaged in lightering operations, and some lighters have been destroyed by US air strikes as they moved toward the coast. At Hon La Island, for example, two were destroyed and secondary explosions were noted. [REDACTED] 25X1D3a [REDACTED] a possible supply point/bivouac area about one mile north of the mouth of the river leading to Vinh. There is no way of estimating how much of the cargo will successfully be brought to shore.

Scale of US Air Operations

51. With the initiation of Operation LINEBACKER, US air units began a systematic campaign against the major logistic and military targets in North Vietnam. By 7 June, about 6,000 attack sorties (205 per day) had been flown throughout North Vietnam. (The current campaign, however, falls short of the highest countrywide daily average achieved during ROLLING THUNDER. During August 1967, a total of 11,846 attack sorties -- 382 per day -- were flown.) In addition, over 47,000 rounds of naval gunfire have been directed against targets in North Vietnam since 5 April.

52. US air operations have been concentrated in three principal areas. In northern North Vietnam, the attacks have focused on the Hanoi-Lao Cai railroad in the northwest, the Hanoi-Dong Dang railroad in the northeast, and the Hanoi-Haiphong railroad in the east. Bridges, tunnels, track, and rolling stock have been the targets most frequently attacked by pilots. In addition, petroleum and other storage areas surrounding Hanoi and Haiphong have been struck in the north. The second major area of strikes has occurred in central North Vietnam between Thanh Hoa and Vinh. Again, the rail line and associated targets, including petroleum storage areas between these points, bore the brunt of the attacks. Finally, US attacks in southern North Vietnam have concentrated on an area just north of the DMZ. Unlike the other sorties, these strikes have been targeted largely against the movement of men and supplies supporting the current offensive. Trucks, artillery pieces, roads, and storage areas have been the targets most frequently struck in this area. In addition, North Vietnam's air defenses, including surface-to-air missile equipment, radar, and antiaircraft artillery, have come under heavy fire in all three areas.





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Effects of US Air Operations on the North Vietnamese
Transportation System

General

53. Operations to date have significantly disrupted and delayed traffic movements especially on the railroads -- but as indicated above the bombing has not stopped all traffic. Part of the campaign's immediate achievements can be attributed to the use of "smart" bombs and part to the overall lack of any concerted countermeasure efforts by the North Vietnamese during the first two weeks of the bombing. However, since then quick repairs and countermeasures at some key rail interdictions -- particularly on the Hanoi-Dong Dang line to China -- have been increasingly evident. The effects of LINEBACKER on roads and waterways to date is harder to judge, but high levels of highway traffic continue in the Panhandle where LINEBACKER attacks on highways have so far been concentrated. Repair activity is evident along several key roads and there is some evidence of mine sweeping operations in southern inland waterways.

Railroad System

54. The railroad network -- particularly the main routes through Dong Dang and Lao Cai into China -- has been a primary target of US aerial bombardment. Several railroad yards and bridges along four of the country's seven rail lines have been destroyed or damaged, disrupting operations and restricting through rail service. Rail targets on two of the remaining three lines -- the Hanoi-Thai Nguyen and Kep-Thai Nguyen routes -- have not yet been attacked. On the Hon Gay-Kep line, the only targets hit have been the railroad yard and bridge at Uong Bi near the thermal powerplant. During the initial phases of LINEBACKER, [REDACTED] 25X1D3a

[REDACTED] 25X1D3a
[REDACTED] Such inactivity 25X1D3a
suggests that the intensity of the bombing was a surprise to the North Vietnamese, and time was needed to gear up their repair effort. Since late May, however, there has been an increasing number of repairs and bypass construction at key targets.

Hanoi-Dong Dang Line

55. Of the 20 major bridges and 10 main railroad yards on this major overland import route, six bridges have been destroyed and one yard heavily damaged, periodically interrupting through

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rail traffic from China. To date, however, quick repairs and bypass construction have been noted at interdictions on this line -- much more so than on the other rail lines -- suggesting the North Vietnamese are concentrating their repair efforts on this, their most important rail import route.

56. Of the six bridges destroyed to date, the railroad/highway bridge at Cao Nung, 65 miles northeast of Hanoi, was repaired in at least 11 days and the railroad bridge at Vu Chua -- reported destroyed on 23 May -- was serviceable on 29 May

25X1D3a

Both of these crossings are north of Kep, and with these repairs, through rail service from China to Yen Vien, seven miles north of Hanoi, was possible via the Kep-Thai Nguyen-Yen Vien alternate to the west for at least several days since mid-month. These bridges were reported destroyed again on 2 June and through rail service was again interrupted. (4) However, highway traffic can shuttle goods around the crossings. South of Kep, the Bac Giang railroad/highway bridge has been interdicted since 23 May, but several highway bypasses are available and a rail ferry and rail bridge are under construction, assuring the continuation of some shuttle service.

57. The key mile-long Hanoi railroad/highway bridge -- the Doumer Bridge -- which serves rail traffic from all northern rail lines to points south of Hanoi was destroyed on 10 May. During ROLLING THUNDER there were 22 different bypasses at this bridge -- highway and rail ferries and pontoon bridges which together provided more transport capacity than the original bridge. To date, there are two highway pontoon bridges in operation showing heavy use. There is, in addition, a railroad ferry.

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25X6

25X6

4. Since mid-May, some East European and Soviet technicians have departed North Vietnam by vehicle and aircraft probably because of either impediments or danger of travel on the Dong Dang line.

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Hanoi-Lao Cai Line

58. To date, 12 of the nearly 40 main bridges on this secondary overland import route have been attacked and 10 have been reported destroyed, including the line's longest bridge -- at Viet Tri about 30 miles northwest of Hanoi.

25X1D3a [REDACTED] some of these bridges remain interdicted with no bypasses currently available, but with others under repair only a week after being damaged. The main bottleneck to through-service is at Viet Tri because most of the other bridges are small and easily repaired. Through rail service is not possible between Hanoi and China on this line, but some shuttling is possible.

Hanoi-Haiphong Line

59. This main import line for seaborne cargoes which arrived at Haiphong before the mining is currently interdicted at Haiphong and at Hai Duong, about midway between Hanoi and Haiphong. The Haiphong railroad/highway bridge, the Haiphong rail yards, and the two railroad/highway bridges at Hai Duong have been attacked and are currently unserviceable. Currently

25X1D3a [REDACTED] no repair efforts to the main bridges to date, however, and through rail service between Hanoi and Haiphong is not possible. Road traffic can continue out of Haiphong, however, via serviceable highway bypasses and could provide a shuttle service for the rail system. Highway bypasses are also available at Hai Duong.

Hanoi-Vinh Line

60. By far the heaviest concentration of air strikes in North Vietnam has been south of Hanoi, where the primary targets have included rail yards and sidings and numerous rail bridges. The reported bomb damage to date has reflected this emphasis: around 300 pieces of rolling stock have been reported destroyed or damaged. The damage to bridges and rail yards has effectively stopped the through movement of trains from Hanoi into the Panhandle of North Vietnam, although shuttling is possible.

61. The North Vietnamese retain some ability to move supplies by rail relatively unimpeded from Hanoi to Ninh Binh. However, the capability rapidly deteriorates south of this point where the rail facilities have borne the full brunt of the present 25X1D3a interdiction effort. [REDACTED]

25X1D [REDACTED] in addition to the damage or destruction of almost every major rail bridge from Ninh Binh to Vinh, several rail yards and sidings have been effectively damaged, thereby

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25X1D3a blocking the rail line with derelict railcars, ripped-up track, and craters. [REDACTED] very few if any attempts to repair or bypass the interdicted yards. However, some rail and highway countermeasures are beginning to be evident at selected bridges on the northernmost segment of the line, such as Ninh Binh, Dong Phong Thuong, and Thanh Hoa. Further south, between Thanh Hoa and Vinh, rail movement will probably continue to be difficult because of the larger number of interdictions and the apparent lack of bypass efforts. South of Vinh on the light-capacity tramway, LINEBACKER has effectively closed the line to through rail service. A message from a military logistical organization at Vinh on 29 May stated that the disruption of the rail line was causing distribution problems in the area.

Highways

62. The interruptions to through rail traffic have not yet sparked a visible shift from railroad to alternative truck mode of transport in the northern half of the country. Repeated photographic reconnaissance over the north has shown no significant change in either the volume or pattern of truck activity along the major highways radiating from the Hanoi-Haiphong region or along the China border. (It should be noted, however, that during Rolling Thunder, photography did not show a major shift from rail to truck transport in this area.)

63. During the initial three weeks of LINEBACKER, attacks against major highway chokepoints in northern North Vietnam have met with some success. By the end of May, many key highway bridge crossings ringing the Hanoi-Haiphong areas and those on National Route 1A, which leads south of the capital into the Panhandle, had been severed. Relatively few countermeasures have been noted except for the addition of a pontoon bridge adjacent to a ferry crossing 7 miles east of Hanoi. Existing ferry and pontoon bridge facilities are being used in the Hanoi and Haiphong areas to shuttle vehicle traffic in and out of these areas and appear adequate to the task despite some congestion observed at the immediate crossing points.

64. In the Panhandle, although most significant highway bridges have been destroyed or damaged, pilots continue to report a significant volume of truck traffic moving. This road system is difficult to interdict because of its redundancy and the myriad bypass options open to the enemy. In many cases, bridges are not an absolute necessity to maintain the flow of traffic as many crossings are fordable, and pontoon bridge sections stored in the area can be assembled quickly at the unfordable crossings.

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65. COMINT generally confirms that truck traffic is moving on the southern road system with continuing shuttling activity. In addition to the southward movement of supplies, substantial numbers of vehicles have also been noted moving west toward Laos.

66. The Communists are, however, obviously facing substantial problems in the Panhandle. One recently intercepted message has indicated that they are having difficulty in meeting some resupply commitments, and their transportation problems have evidently been compounded by a shortage of experienced vehicle drivers. The virtual closure of the rail lines south of Vinh places a greater burden on the roads and imposes a greater requirement for experienced drivers.

Waterways

67. Since LINEBACKER began there has been very little movement noted on the inland waterways in the Panhandle. What movement has occurred has been attacked and, in most cases, reportedly damaged or destroyed. This inactivity may be ending, however, as the enemy organizes himself to meet the challenge of the interdiction effort. In this respect, in early June, the number of watercraft reported sighted by aerial observers far exceeded the numbers reported in earlier weeks. On 1 June a pilot reported a large number of vessels in the mouth of the Song Giang River at Quang Khe, an area which has been mined. In addition, similar activity was noted on 4 June at or near a mine field on the Song Ca River near Vinh. These observations seem to indicate that these waterways may have been cleared of mines and that some river traffic and transshipping operations are taking place.

Impact on Economic and Related Targets

Petroleum Storage Capacity

68. The bombing of petroleum storage facilities has reduced storage capacity in North Vietnam by an estimated 42,000 tons, or about 17% from the total estimated to have existed on 31 March 1972 as shown in the following tabulation:

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	<u>Metric Tons</u>	
	<u>31 Mar</u> <u>1972</u>	<u>3 Jun</u> <u>1972</u>
Principal terminals	67,930	37,000
Dispersed storage		
Tanks	90,000	84,000
Drums	85,000	80,000
Civil, industrial, and military sites	5,000	5,000
Total	247,930	206,000

Almost 31,000 tons of this loss was inflicted on the two principal storage terminals at Haiphong and Hanoi. An estimated total of 37,000 tons of storage capacity (including about 6,900 tons at Haiphong and 3,400 tons at Hanoi) is considered to remain at the eight principal terminals.

69. There were about 220 small tank sites dispersed throughout North Vietnam just prior to the US air operation. Dispersed at random and well-concealed, these tanks are relatively invulnerable to attack. Small tank capacity is estimated to have been reduced from 90,000 tons on 31 March 1972 to about 84,000 tons on 2 June. Storage capacity of 55-gallon drums and other small containers represented about 85,000 tons on 31 March, and not more than about 5,000 tons of this capacity (equivalent to about 30,000 55-gallon drums) have been destroyed.

70. There is no information on the operational status of the pipeline system -- which itself represents petroleum "storage" -- although the system has been damaged in places and some pumping stations reportedly have been hit. Because replacement pumps and line pipe almost certainly are available in North Vietnam, they could be repaired or replaced in a matter of hours.

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Petroleum Stock Levels

71. There is no evidence of shortages of petroleum nor of anxiety on the part of Hanoi about near-term supplies. Consumption of petroleum by both military and civil sectors during the early part of 1972 was estimated to have been about 1,200 tons per day. Following the mining of the harbors and the intensified bombing, some conservation measures probably were imposed and the activity of petroleum consuming equipment reduced. Thus, consumption of petroleum may have declined to about 1,000 tons per day since the bombing began.

72. Under these conditions, North Vietnamese stocks of petroleum may have been about 70,000 tons to 93,000 tons, representing 70 to 93 days of supply on 2 June 1972 at the 1,000 tons per day consumption level. Not all of these stocks can be considered as usable: small quantities of petroleum in each of the thousands of small storage tanks (tank bottoms) and drums probably could not be removed completely.

Overland Imports of Petroleum

73. There is nothing as yet to indicate that petroleum in quantity is being moved into North Vietnam overland, although some tank cars have been sighted at the P'ing-hsiang border crossing recently. Petroleum in quantities sufficient to meet minimum essential needs in North Vietnam could be imported by rail through China from the USSR. Seaborne imports of petroleum could be delivered to bulk storage facilities at Fort Bayard or Canton/Whampoa in south China and be transshipped by rail to North Vietnam. Furthermore, there are three "strategic storage" sites in south China near the border with North Vietnam. One of these with an estimated capacity of about 33,000 tons is located at Kai-yuan about 140 miles from Lao Cai; two others with a total capacity of about 53,000 tons are located at Nan-ning, about 140 miles from Dong Dang. These three sites are served by rail, and shipment to the North Vietnamese border would be relatively simple.

74. Imports of petroleum from the China border by truck, however, would be extremely difficult. If imported in drums, the daily requirement (both military and civilian) of 1,000 tons would involve the movement of about 500 truckloads southbound daily. If imported in bulk, the equivalent of about 330 tank trucks would be required southbound daily.

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Recent evidence of construction of a pipeline system north from the vicinity of Hai Duong in the direction of Kep suggests that the North Vietnamese may plan to extend the system to the China border. Such a facility would, of course, simplify the overland imports of petroleum from the China border. Given sufficient line pipe and pumps on hand, this line could be completed to the vicinity of Dong Dang by the end of June.

Industrial Facilities

75. Air strikes against industrial targets have been concentrated on electric power facilities. Of the estimated 260,000 kilowatts (KW) of generating capacity available at the beginning of the interdiction campaign, some 90,000 KW (35%) currently may be out of service. (5) Damage appears sufficient to prevent even partial operation of most plants for periods ranging from two to six months. The damaged Ben Thuy and Thanh Hoa powerplants, each serving small areas in the vicinity, probably can be offset to some extent by use of mobile diesel generating equipment. Six powerplants in the Hanoi-Haiphong power network have been struck. Power supply remains generally adequate, however, although temporary outages undoubtedly have occurred. Since the end of 1971, North Vietnam's reconstruction effort had brought total generating capacity up to about 170,000 KW, and by May 1972 another 90,000 KW was put into service. Most of the new additions came from completion of the Thac Ba Hydroelectric Powerplant. Based on the end-year situation, therefore, North Vietnam's reserve cushion at the start of the current bombing campaign was on the order of 100,000 KW.

76. In other branches of industry, three significant targets have been struck. The Haiphong Cement Plant, the country's only large producer of cement, has been out of operation for about six weeks. Damage here is relatively moderate and could be repaired quickly if parts are available. At the Nam Dinh Textile Plant, about one-third of the main production buildings have received moderate to heavy damage. The textile plant represents roughly 40% of weaving and spinning capacity in North Vietnam. Damage to the Hon Gay Coal Processing Plant, the second largest such facility in the country, will curtail sorting and grading of coal but will have little

25X1D3a

5. Losses

amount to 68,000 KW (26%).

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effect on mining capabilities. Of these three industrial facilities, shutdown of the cement plant probably will produce the most serious problems.

77. The most immediate effect of bombing on the economy would appear to be a cutback in nonessential construction activity. Several groups of Polish technicians have been noted leaving the country, and at least 96 Soviet technicians working on various industrial projects have been flown out. An additional 40 Soviet powerplant technicians are scheduled to be flown out on 8 June. The exodus of technicians probably is an indication that work on these economic aid projects will be suspended, at least in areas where the risk of further bombing is high. Because of North Vietnam's heavy dependence on foreign technicians, there is also a possibility that repair of bomb damage to industry may be postponed or limited to a small select segment.

78. Beyond the confirmed physical damage and cutback in construction, there are no hard signs of economic dislocation caused by the interdiction effort. [REDACTED] no 25X1D3a
general curtailment of economic activity as of 31 May. Substantial disruption has reportedly resulted from the evacuation of large numbers of people from urban centers, involving chiefly the elderly and young, as well as handicraft enterprises. As yet, however, no evacuation of larger industrial installations has been reported.

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